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# JOEL KITCHENS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 1<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Rep. Kitchens proposing birth control access bill

MADISON, Wis. – State Rep. Joel Kitchens, R-Sturgeon Bay, has started circulating a bill for co-sponsorship that is designed to increase access to birth control and reduce unplanned pregnancies, which can have a considerable impact on mothers, their families and society as a whole.

LRB-0325 would, under specific conditions, allow a woman to obtain hormonal contraceptive patches and self-administered oral hormonal contraceptives – including common birth control pills – through a prescription from a pharmacist. Under current law, hormonal birth control is only available with a physician’s prescription.

“By policy, prescription drugs are so deemed because they either have high abuse potential or potentially harmful side effects that require a physician’s oversight,” Kitchens said. “Neither of these conditions apply to the products covered in this bill. While any pharmaceutical can have undesirable side effects in certain individuals, today’s birth control formulations are as benign as most over-the-counter medications. Because of that, we should not be putting up artificial barriers that prevent women from being able to conveniently obtain birth control.”

Prior years of research and a 2018 report from the Centers for Disease Control show that increasing access to and the use of effective contraceptives can reduce unintended pregnancies.

According to the latest available statistics, nearly half of all pregnancies in Wisconsin and across the nation are unplanned, with state and federal taxpayers spending \$21 billion annually on related medical care. Almost 63 percent of unintended births in Wisconsin are publicly-funded and cost taxpayers about \$314 million annually.

Under Kitchens’ bill, women who are seeking to obtain birth control from a pharmacy must participate in a self-assessment questionnaire and undergo a blood pressure screening administered by a pharmacist. If there are any red flags, the pharmacist can then refer the patient to their physician. The legislation only applies to woman who are 18 years of age or older.

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